

The Business Case for Managed Services for Videoconferencing

***Understanding the Scope,
Benefits, and Justification of
Managed Service Offerings***



The Business Case for Managed Services for Videoconferencing

*Understanding the Scope, Benefits, and Justification of Managed
Service Offerings*

**Ira M. Weinstein
Wainhouse Research**

November 2004



Table of Contents

What Is The Problem Today?	1
What Is A Managed Service Offering?	3
The Layers of Video Conferencing Environment Management.....	3
The Business Case for a Managed Service Offering	8
The Concerns and Costs of Internal Conferencing Management	8
The Benefits of a Managed Service Offering	9
Conclusion	12
Appendix 1 - Selecting the Right Managed Service Offering	13
Step 1 – Needs Assessment	13
Step 2 – Classification / Prioritization.....	14
Step 3 – Information Gathering	14
Step 4 – Preliminary Vendor List.....	14
Step 5 – Vendor Short List	14
Step 6 – Vendor Selection	15
About Wainhouse Research	16
About the Author.....	16
About York Telecom	16

List of Figures

Figure 1: York Telecom's Managed Service Model	6
Figure 2: York Telecom TMVS ROI Chart	10
Figure 3: Basic Needs Assessment Example	13
Figure 4: Specific Areas of Interest	15

What Is The Problem Today?

Many organizations, both large and small, provide conferencing services to their internal and external user community on a daily basis. The question is, how many of these companies are able to provide those services in the most cost-effective, efficient, and successful manner? In many cases, the internal conferencing teams do not have the support tools (software systems, monitoring capabilities) they need to effectively manage the conferencing environment. As one might imagine, this makes conferencing management an extremely challenging task for even the most highly trained, experienced, and dedicated team.

The global business climate has never been more competitive. In order to survive, organizations must not only adopt a wide array of business and communication tools, but also effectively manage those tools. Unfortunately, most organizations are not managing their conferencing resources effectively. They spend more money than necessary, deploy a seemingly endless stream of internal and external resources, and often enjoy only average performance from their internal conferencing services. While it doesn't make sense to spend more and get less, that is an unfortunate reality within many companies.

According to a study conducted by the UK Office of Telecommunications in 2002 and presented at the IMTC 2002 Forum, the availability of the average room-based video conferencing solution ranges from 65 to 85 %. In addition, the availability of desktop videoconferencing ranges from 94.3% (ISDN) to 99.5% (IP).¹ When compared to the legendary five nines (99.999%) availability of the typical telephone service, it is easy to understand why in the eyes of many enterprise managers and end-users, conferencing services just do not make the grade. Other than an alarmingly low level of reliability, organizations also have difficulty managing, budgeting, and controlling the cost of conferencing within the enterprise. Far too often companies must deal with unexpectedly high transport charges, meeting support and staffing costs, or external service fees (bridging, gateways, etc.). The combination of limited reliability, high resource requirements, and varying costs often causes the most significant problem of all – a low utilization of conferencing resources.

The situation described above is the challenge that many conferencing departments currently face. Simply stated, in order for internal conferencing teams to provide reliable services and increase usage, the organization must invest in both resources and technology. However, organizations are understandably reluctant to invest in technologies that are rarely used and traditionally perceived as unreliable. Therefore, the service remains unreliable, users remain skeptical as to the benefit and value-add of conferencing, costs (especially per use) remain high, and investments remain hard to justify. This vicious cycle is surprisingly hard to break.

¹ UK Office of Telecommunications - Study of 4 major carriers and analysis of 990,802 video calls.

It is important to clarify that this unfortunate situation is not necessarily due to a lack of effort or commitment on the part of those organizations. It is, instead, caused by the inherent complexities of conferencing management. Effective conferencing management requires a combination of adequately trained, dedicated, and experienced resources and specialized management tools. In theory, an organization must become a conferencing management company in order to properly manage their conferencing. This requires a shift away from the organization's core competency and source of revenue, a shift which many organizations are appropriately unwilling to enact.

The problem in many conferencing environments is the inability to effectively manage the internal conferencing service given the available financial and staff resources. This is the problem that a "managed service" offering can help resolve by acting as a partner and strong resource for the internal conferencing manager.

Several years ago, this analyst was responsible for recreating and retooling the conferencing department within a Fortune 50 organization. At that time, comprehensive managed services offerings did not exist. In addition, remote management capabilities and centralized management systems for conferencing were immature and untested. Therefore, outsourcing conferencing management would have resulted in exorbitant costs and performance sacrifices.

This analyst has been responsible for re-creating and re-tooling the conferencing department within a Fortune 50 organization. At that time, outsourcing conferencing management would have resulted in exorbitant costs and performance sacrifices. Fortunately, today's conferencing managers have various options available to them.

Fortunately, today's conferencing managers have various options available to them. Given this same responsibility today, this analyst would seriously consider one (or more) managed service offerings in lieu of a totally internal solution.

What Is A Managed Service Offering?

The term “managed service offering” has become an over-used buzz-word within the conferencing community. Vendor marketing teams have labeled managed services as anything ranging from onsite meeting support to an external bridge offering.

At Wainhouse Research, we consider a true managed service offering to be a solution that potentially covers all aspects of conferencing environment management.

A “true” managed service offering is a solution that encompasses all aspects of conferencing environment management.

Based on this broader definition, the two examples given above (onsite meeting support and bridging services) would be elements within a managed service offering. However, such a component-level view of managed services neglects what is perhaps the primary benefit of such offerings: the ability to manage all aspects of the conferencing environment in the aggregate instead of via an individual call or meeting basis. Taking this example further, an effective managed service would provide onsite meeting support services when absolutely required and requested, but would recommend more cost-effective remote meeting management for most meeting situations. This is the model successfully adopted by IT support departments, and it is finally making its way into the conferencing arena.

Although this document will focus primarily on video conferencing environment management, these principles apply equally well to all other forms of conferencing including audio, web, and data.

The Layers of Video Conferencing Environment Management

A turnkey managed service offering should cover both the service and technology aspects of a conferencing environment. For clarity’s sake, it helps to categorize the general areas of conferencing management into layers. The following three-layer system is followed by York Telecom, a U.S.-based conferencing solution and managed video service provider, and the sponsor of this white paper.

Layer 1 – The End-User / Application Layer

The first and most visible layer of a managed service offering is the end-user / application layer. In a general sense, this layer includes items that directly touch the conferencing end users including:

- Meeting and resource scheduling systems
- On-site meeting management (as required)
- Meeting support services and help desk (24/7 or at least business hours)
- End-user training and internal marketing / adoption programs
- Detailed usage information, reporting, and billing / chargeback services

Effective management of the end-user / applications layer requires a combination of tools and qualified staff, both of which must be available at the end-user's convenience. In addition, some vendors include additional end-user support services including:

- Project management tools
- Equipment procurement and integration
- Equipment replacement / maintenance / spare program
- A proactive technology refreshment program

Layer 2 – The Service Layer

The second layer of video management involves the management of the meeting environment within the enterprise and typically includes some (or all) of the following items:

- Automatic call launching (both point to point and multipoint)
- Automatic call termination (based on production schedule)
- Video system management (room-based and desktop systems)
- Coordination of system updates / configuration changes
- Recurring system testing to ensure meeting success
- Proactive monitoring of all deployed video systems
- Problem detection and resolution (including trouble ticket management)
- System warranty and maintenance programs (as required and recurring)
- New system deployment procedures (configuration, testing, addition to databases)
- Real-time reporting for operations and management staff (system status, open problems, etc.)

In order to provide the above services in a coordinated, efficient manner, vendors rely upon a video network management system. In fact, a powerful video network management system is an important part of ensuring high reliability and performance within the conferencing environment.

The video network management system ensures the highest possible reliability within the videoconferencing environment.

Superior video network management systems provide advanced monitoring by automatically and frequently checking the health and readiness of all video endpoints and infrastructure devices (gateways, gatekeepers, and endpoints) within the conferencing environment. Once a problem has been detected, a trouble ticket is automatically created and the appropriate notifications and alerts are immediately released. This capability ensures that problem troubleshooting and resolution efforts begin immediately and that all appropriate resources (both internal and external) have been notified about the situation. In a way, the video network management system acts as a video watchdog by monitoring the global conferencing environment to protect the end-user conferencing experience.

Layer 3 – The Infrastructure Layer

The third layer of video management involves the deployment, monitoring, and management of the centralized infrastructure devices and network services required by the enterprise organization. The first part of the infrastructure layer includes the equipment necessary to provide specific meeting services and features including:

- Audio and video bridges (MCUs)
- Gateway services / solutions (between IP and ISDN, and potentially vice-versa)
- Web conferencing servers / solution
- Streaming solutions (including content capture, management, and distribution capabilities)
- Conferencing gatekeepers for call management and user-based permissioning

Superior offerings allow the end-user organization to choose between different service models such as:

- a) ASP Model – To avoid capital expenditures, the end-user organization uses the service provider's infrastructure devices on a per-meeting or flat-rate cost basis.
- b) Hosted Model – The end-user purchases the infrastructure equipment and pays the service provider a monthly fee to host the equipment within their facilities and manage the devices on their behalf.
- c) Hybrid Model – Any combination of the above, such as the end user purchasing the equipment for local installation under the management of the service provider.

The second part of the infrastructure layer involves all aspects of the conferencing network or transport layer. In most non-managed conferencing environments, the transport layer itself is not proactively monitored for quality of service / performance issues. Unfortunately, this means that network problems are usually discovered at the worst possible moment – when connecting the video systems immediately prior to the scheduled meeting start.

In effect, organizations that don't manage and monitor their video transport layer are risking failure every time they initiate a meeting. Fortunately, through basic transport layer management, a managed service offering can take the surprise out of network failures and super-charge the chance of meeting success.

Transport layer management may include any (or all) of the following items:

- Network needs assessment services
- Network service deployment / management / monitoring
- Procurement and deployment of IP and/or ISDN network equipment
- Integrated network redundancy / fall-over call routing
- Creation and implementation of IP dialing plans
- Various levels of performance guarantees and service level agreements (SLAs)
- Real-time network reporting

Readers should note that real-time reporting is included in all three layers of the conferencing environment. In layer 1, end users have access to usage and billing reports. As a part of layer 2, conferencing managers enjoy a host of system status reports. Finally, in layer 3, support staff benefit from network availability, performance, and issue reports.

An Integrated Turnkey Offering

A compelling managed service offering should include services covering all aspects of the conferencing environment.

In addition, to help the end-user organization effectively manage costs and avoid technology obsolescence, the managed service offering should include attractive financing options and a fixed monthly price plan.

A compelling managed service offering should include proactive monitoring and management for both the video endpoints and transport network, in addition to a wealth of customizable support services.

The diagram below illustrates the three layer approach as utilized by the York Telecom Corporation, a leading managed service provider, for their TMVS (Total Managed Video Service) offering.

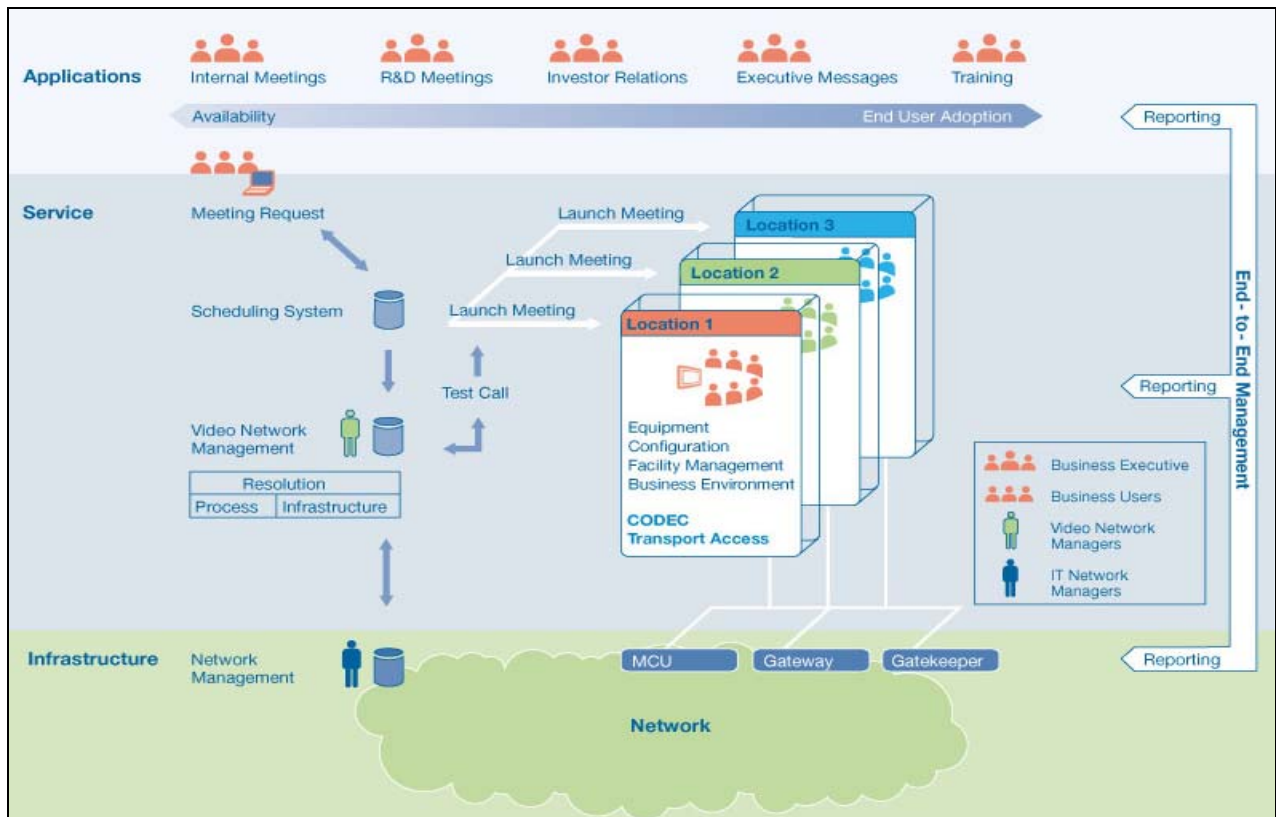


Figure 1: York Telecom's Managed Service Model

In Wainhouse Research's opinion, York Telecom's TMVS is an excellent example of a turnkey managed service offering for the conferencing environment.

Specifically, as a part of their three layer approach, TMVS gives end users access to a wide array of support services and functions and allows customers to tailor and customize the service package (and pricing model) to meet their requirements. Also notable is York's web-based portal which allows end users and conferencing managers (based on their login permissioning) to monitor and proactively manage their conferencing environment.

York Telecom's Total Managed Video Service (TMVS) is an excellent example of a turnkey managed service offering for the enterprise conferencing environment.

The Business Case for a Managed Service Offering

In a general sense, the business case behind a managed service for conferencing is similar to the business case behind the use of any other external service. It requires that one clearly define the requirements of the organization, and the advantages (and disadvantages) of outsourcing the fulfillment of these requirements to an external vendor.

For the purposes of this document, it is assumed that the organization has already deployed (or decided to deploy) conferencing services within their enterprise. Therefore this document focuses on the drivers for outsourcing the management of that environment to a managed service provider (MSP).

The Concerns and Costs of Internal Conferencing Management

The management of a global conferencing environment is anything but simple. It involves paying careful attention to the countless details related to the conferencing endpoints, central management tools, and infrastructure equipment. In addition, one must consider specific meeting support requirements, and the need to deploy, manage, and monitor the underlying transport network for conferencing. Furthermore, these support services must be available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, on a global basis. The following outlines several key areas of consideration regarding internal conferencing management:

Cost Efficiency

Organizations that internally manage their conferencing environment must create and fund a department dedicated to supporting their internal conferencing requirements. This forces the host organization to incur a variety of costs including:

- The hiring, management, and continuous training of internal conferencing support staff including scheduling staff, helpdesk staff, and meeting support resources.
- The purchase and deployment of conferencing management systems such as centralized scheduling software and video network management systems

Unfortunately, for confidentiality and logistical reasons, the end-user organization cannot easily share these resources with other companies, and therefore must bear 100% of the burden of these initial (setup) and recurring costs themselves. Furthermore, while some of the costs (such as in-room meeting management) are variable, many of these related costs are fixed – regardless of the number of rooms, number of meetings, or number of employees within an organization. In other words, an end-user organization that manages their own conferencing environment will have difficulty enjoying any economy of scale benefits.

Limited Motivation to Improve Service

To justify and recoup the costs (both hard and soft) of the conferencing subsidiary, the end-user organization typically mandates that all conferencing requirements be directed to the internal conferencing department. The upshot of this policy is that the conferencing department does not have to

battle to win and maintain their customer base. While this does not infer the conferencing team will provide anything but top-notch service, it does remove much of the competitive pressures that force external organizations to continuously improve their services, provide superior customer support, and adjust costs to remain competitive.

Diversion from Core Competencies

It is a fact is that investing funds, resources, and efforts away from the core competency of the firm is not usually in the best interests of an organization. In other words, organizations must consider the opportunity cost related to deploying personnel and other resources on non-revenue generating activities, such as conferencing service management. This is not to say that there should be no internal resources managing conferencing services. One should, however, find the proper balance of internal and external resources that will best support the priorities and strategic direction of the firm.

Readers should note that the argument to focus on core competencies has already been made (and won) by many other departments within most firms. For example, most companies use service providers for their local transportation (car service) needs. In order to internally manage car services, the company would have to purchase / lease vehicles, coordinate maintenance, hire and train drivers, pay for fuel, locate safe garages and security staff to watch the vehicles, and much more. In lieu of becoming a car service company, organizations delegate these services to external vendors while maintaining overall management, control, and accountability for these services internally. Similar examples abound and include phone services, moves and changes, electrical work, construction work, mail services, food services, security services, and more. Wise conferencing managers will leverage these similar situations to support the case for a managed service offering.

The Benefits of a Managed Service Offering

High-quality managed service offerings provide host organizations with a strong combination of performance, reliability, and cost-effectiveness for their conferencing environment. The following section highlights a few of the key benefits:

Performance and Services

Perhaps the most significant benefit of deploying a professional managed service offering is consistent and reliable conferencing performance for the end-user community. All managed service offerings worthy of consideration provide a level of proactive endpoint and conferencing network monitoring beyond that conducted internally by most organizations today. When activated and combined with the troubleshooting and remedial efforts of the vendor, this results in increased meeting success rates, and an associated increase in user satisfaction. The best vendors will provide a service level agreement (SLA) that financially guarantees the success of your company's conferencing under their management program.

In addition to the above performance assurances, superior offerings include a performance enhancement program that includes recurring incident reports and the creation (and implementation) of procedures to improve the value of the service. In concept, this means that the return on the investment of the managed service will increase throughout the term of the agreement.

Cost / Financial Issues

Depending upon the situation, organizations may experience both cost savings and an increased return on investment (ROI) on their conferencing resources by activating a managed service offering. The cost savings is a direct result of the “pay one price” model offered by many vendors. Under this program, the monthly cost of conferencing does not change, regardless of monthly usage. This means that the cost of conferencing can finally be controlled and properly budgeted on a monthly and yearly basis.

Thanks to performance and reliability improvements, most end-user organizations enjoy increased usage of their conferencing services after deploying a managed service offering. Considering that each videoconference meeting provides the host organization with cost and time savings, additional usage equates to additional cost savings (and therefore an increased ROI on conferencing investments).

Superior managed service offerings provide a “pay one price” model for both conference calls and ancillary services (video bridging, meeting management, etc.), thereby allowing an organization to accurately budget for and limit the cost of their conferencing.

When coupled with the “pay one price” model described above, end-users have the potential to enjoy ever-increasing savings and returns as their usage continues to increase.

The chart below shows the calculated ROI that an end-user could enjoy by placing a total of 81 conference rooms under York Telecom’s TMVS fixed price managed service offering. For this calculation, the basic assumptions were that each room hosts 1.2 meetings per day, that the average meeting includes 2.2 rooms (some meetings are point-to-point, others are multipoint), and that the resource utilization increased from 9% to 15% over a 2-year period. As a result, this organization enjoyed 1st and 2nd year benefits of \$436,000 and \$2.4M respectively as a result of activating TMVS.

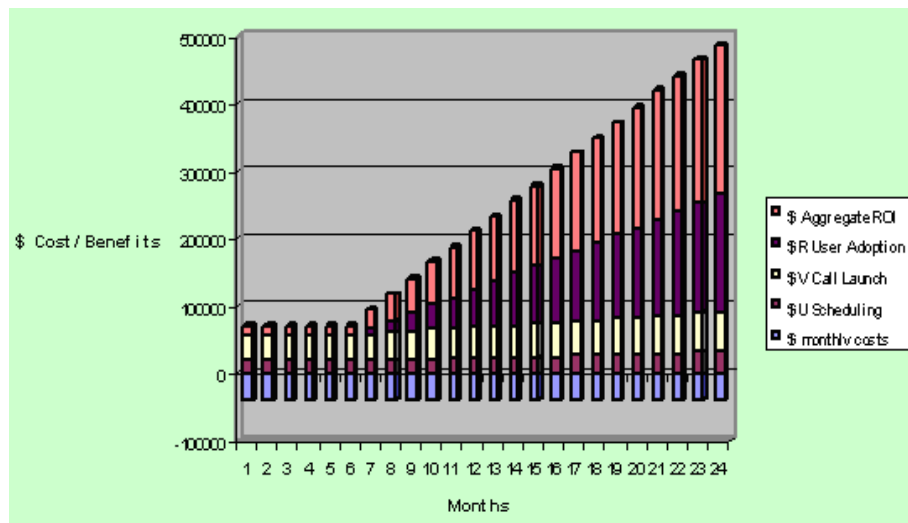


Figure 2: York Telecom TMVS ROI Chart

Staffing Issues

Another major benefit of a managed service offering is the ability to limit the internal resources needed to support conferencing. Note that the use of such a service does not remove the need for an internal conferencing team. Instead, the managed service becomes a resource that serves and supports the conferencing management staff while relieving the daily headaches of employing and training those individuals. Basically, the conferencing managers enjoy the use of a dedicated, fully trained and readily-available team of professionals who support conferencing environments every single day. Best of all, the end-user organizations are responsible for only a shared portion of the cost of these individuals.

Management Benefits

Managed service offerings provide additional benefits for internal conferencing managers. Specifically, the tracking and reporting tools within the service help make conferencing a quantifiable entity. Internal managers will have a series of reports and metrics available to them for internal justification, risk aversion, and performance improvement initiatives. Examples of such metrics include:

- Detailed and real-time usage information / reports (by person, department, location, date, etc.)
- Detailed service adoption information / reports
- Detailed cost information
- Return on investment (ROI) calculations
- Meeting success (and failure information)
- Causes of meeting difficulties
- Benchmarking information (comparison of performance vs. peers)

The “on the fly” availability of this type of information allows the internal conferencing manager to document the performance and consistent improvement of the internal conferencing service, two metrics that are vital to the success of any business entity.

Conclusion

At this point few can debate the business case behind the use of videoconferencing within the small, medium, and large enterprise. Benefits range from cost savings to time savings and the ability to bridge geographical gaps and unite globally deployed work teams. Because of the time saving benefit, many executives have accepted videoconferencing as a part of their business routine. The above notwithstanding, a surprisingly high percentage of organizations have yet to make videoconferencing available to their user community at large.

As a result of the complexities of this technology, videoconferencing carries with it the reputation of being an unreliable and somewhat temperamental business tool. However, a new crop of managed videoconferencing service offerings is now able to help an enterprise's existing conferencing team to deliver an enhanced level of performance and reliability. While the breadth of services available varies by vendor, superior managed service offerings provide key support services including centralized scheduling, meeting support, help desk services, end-user training, internal marketing assistance, proactive video endpoint and network monitoring, and a wealth of management reports. The combination of these items, once deployed, results in increased user satisfaction, additional usage of the services, lower "per meeting" usage costs, and a resulting incrementally improving ROI on conferencing investments. In short, these services help enterprise conferencing managers morph their environment into an effectively managed and cost-effective internal service offering.

In the past, technologically barriers rendered it difficult for external organizations to provide services of this type to enterprise customers. Today, thanks to the proliferation of IP networks and remote management capabilities within conferencing equipment, such services can be deployed quickly and easily, and in most cases without the need for fork-lift network or equipment upgrades.

Wainhouse Research expects that many organizations will deploy these types of services in an effort to avoid investing in conferencing infrastructure and support resources and instead focus on their core competencies. End users are encouraged to carefully analyze not only the offering, but also the company behind the offering and the associated performance guarantees, before signing on the dotted line.

Considering today's aggressively competitive business climate, the time has never been better for organizations to consider using these types of outsourced managed service offerings.

Appendix 1 - Selecting the Right Managed Service Offering

As with any other product or service selection, organizations should take a careful and systematic approach to selecting their managed service provider. Wainhouse Research recommends the following six-step process:

Step 1 – Needs Assessment

End-user organizations considering managed services should have a solid understanding of their actual requirements, and most specifically the degree of automation they wish within their conferencing environment. Although a detailed discussion of needs analysis is beyond the scope of this document, a conferencing manager should be able to create a basic needs assessment by following the example below:

LAYER 1 REQUIREMENTS – END USER LAYER	
<p><u>Items We Need</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralized Scheduling System 24 / 7 Help Desk Support 800 # Access To Remote Schedulers End-User and Support Staff Training Spare Equipment within 48 hours Access to On The Fly Reporting 	<p><u>Items We Don't Need</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-Lingual Support / Scheduling Services Meeting Reporting On-Site Meeting Support On-Site Spare Equipment Integrated Billing / Chargeback Capabilities Project Management
LAYER 2 REQUIREMENTS – VIDEO NETWORK LAYER	
<p><u>Items We Need</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement of Group VC Systems Automatic Call Launching Proactive Endpoint Monitoring Video Bridging Services ISDN Gateway Services 	<p><u>Items We Don't Need</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement of Desktop VC Systems Procurement of Gateways, Gatekeepers, MCUs Meeting Recording / Streaming / VoD IP Network Equipment
LAYER 3 REQUIREMENTS – TRANSPORT LAYER	
<p><u>Items We Need</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network Testing (to confirm suitability) Monitoring of Existing Data Network Real-Time Network Reporting 	<p><u>Items We Don't Need</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deployment of Dedicated VC Network Deployment of Redundant Network Network Performance Guarantees / SLAs

Figure 3: Basic Needs Assessment Example

The organization described above expects their end users to schedule their own conferences, seeks help desk support, can accept short (less than 48-hour) room outages, seeks a high level of conference automation, wishes to use external bridging services, and most likely plans to utilize their existing IP network to host their videoconferencing traffic.

Step 2 – Classification / Prioritization

The next step is to take the needs documented in step one and classify the importance of each item. Some organizations may find it adequate to tag each item as a must have, a nice-to-have, or a luxury. Other organizations may choose to rate the importance of each item on a numeric scale, perhaps from 1 to 10. The advantage of the numeric method is that the end-user organization can use this information to calculate the most suitable offering based on their requirements and priorities. When activated to conduct an end-user needs assessment, Wainhouse Research typically utilizes numerical categorization.

Step 3 – Information Gathering

With a basic prioritized needs assessment in hand, conferencing managers should gather some additional information that will prove helpful during the pending vendor discussions and RFP process. Specific information might include:

- A detailed site listing – including deployed equipment
- System usage data (on a site by site basis)
- End-user satisfaction information (collected via a short internal survey)
- Current problems / complaints / recurring issues
- Detailed cost information (including support, bridging, network services, transport fees, etc.)
- Existing network configuration (bandwidth between key locations, performance specifications, contracts)

The above information will help managed service vendors to better understand your current situation while enabling you to calculate the potential ROI / savings of a managed service offering.

Step 4 – Preliminary Vendor List

At this point, the conferencing manager should create a list of vendors who offer these types of services. For now, the list should include as many vendors as possible – regardless of their ability to meet your specific requirements. Good sources of information for the preliminary vendor list include Wainhouse Research (website, reports), the World Wide Web, video equipment manufacturers (Polycom, TANDBERG, Sony, VCON, RADVISION, Aethra, etc.) and conferencing managers in other organizations.

Step 5 – Vendor Short List

It is likely that the list generated in step 4 will include 10 or more vendors. In step 5, the list of vendors will be narrowed down to a “short list” including only vendors with offerings that can meet at least your

most important (must have) requirements. Good sources of information for short-listing include the websites of the managed service providers, Wainhouse Research, peers, and even the vendors themselves.

Step 6 – Vendor Selection

Depending upon your organization, the vendor selection process may be formal or somewhat informal. For many companies, vendor selection will require the creation of a request for proposal (RFP) including a detailed needs assessment. Regardless of the level of formality, the basic steps in a vendor selection will involve:

- 1) Releasing basic requirements information to the vendors
- 2) Meeting with / discussing exact requirements with vendors
- 3) Receiving offering information – including pricing
- 4) Comparing offering capabilities with detailed needs assessment
- 5) Ranking the offerings in terms of suitability relative to your requirements

The above process works well for both product and service selection. That said, Wainhouse Research recommends that organizations pay additional attention to certain specific aspects of any managed service offering including:

SPECIFIC AREAS OF INTEREST	
<p><u>Company Details</u> History Management Financials / Profitability Experience Supporting Your Vertical Market Employee Turnover Qualifications / Training of Support Staff Locations Covered / Geographic Reach Reference Customers</p>	<p><u>Offering Details</u> Maturity (# of Years On The Market) Proven Success / Customer Case Studies Flexibility / Modularity of Offering Breadth of Services Cost-Competitiveness Self-Correcting Nature (Do they learn year on year?) Commitment to Excellence Partners Involved in Offering Future Growth Plans / Roadmap</p>

Figure 4: Specific Areas of Interest

This process should serve as a starting point for conferencing managers seeking to discuss their managed service requirements with vendors and select the most appropriate offering for their organization.

About Wainhouse Research

Wainhouse Research (<http://www.wainhouse.com>) is an independent market research firm that focuses on critical issues in rich media communications, videoconferencing, teleconferencing, and streaming media. The company conducts multi-client and custom research studies, consults with end users on key implementation issues, publishes white papers and market statistics, and delivers public and private seminars as well as speaker presentations at industry group meetings. Wainhouse Research publishes *Conferencing Markets & Strategies*, a three-volume study that details the current market trends and major vendor strategies in the multimedia networking infrastructure, endpoints, and services markets, as well as a variety of segment reports, the free newsletter, *The Wainhouse Research Bulletin*, and the PLATINUM (www.wrplatinum.com) content website.

About the Author

Ira M. Weinstein is a Senior Analyst and Consultant at Wainhouse Research, and a 14-year veteran of the conferencing, collaboration and audio-visual industries. Prior to joining Wainhouse Research, Ira was the VP of Marketing and Business Development at IVCi, managed a technology consulting company, and ran the global conferencing department for a Fortune 50 investment bank. Ira's current focus includes IP video conferencing, network service providers, global management systems, scheduling and automation platforms, ROI and technology justification programs, and audio-visual integration. Mr. Weinstein holds a B.S. in Engineering from Lehigh University and is currently pursuing an MBA in Management and Marketing. He can be reached at jweinstein@wainhouse.com.

About York Telecom

Founded in 1985, York Telecom Corporation, headquartered in Eatontown, New Jersey, is a leading provider of visual communication services and solutions for the Federal, State, Government and Fortune 1000 companies. The company offers professional consulting, integration and operational/managed services for visual communication solutions such as Videoconferencing, Video-On-Demand (VoD), Live Streaming Video, Custom Room Design and Multimedia Network Management. York Telecom has a branch office in the Washington DC metropolitan area and a national integration, production and support force.

Additional information about York Telecom can be found on the company's Web site:
<http://www.yorktel.com>.